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Church and State in France

By FREDERICK C. DE SUMICHRAST



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CHURCH AND STATE IN FRANCE



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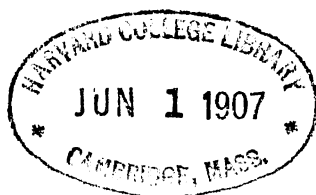
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CHURCH AND STATE IN FRANCE

My object, in the course of this address, is simply to trace the origin and the evolution of the question of the antagonism between the Church and the State through the ages. The impartial presentation of the historical facts will best, in my opinion, enable my hearers to understand the somewhat complicated difference which has arisen between the Roman See on the one hand and the French nation on the other.

It is a mistake to suppose, as so many do, that the question is of recent birth; on the contrary, the struggle between Rome and France goes back to the very earliest times of the establishment of a government in France. It involved, in the course of years, bitter contests between the French sovereigns, the representatives and incarnation of the State, and the Roman pontiffs, and if, as we shall see, the Church and the State became close allies and worked steadily together, it was only after the supremacy of the French King within his realm had been perforce acknowledged by Rome.

So long as France remained a monarchy, the King remained the incarnation of the State; there was no French nation in those days; the nation, as such, was born of the Revolution and of the principles which the Revolution proclaimed and gave effect to. The contest, then, was between the State, in the person of the King, and Rome, so long as lasted the monarchy. When the monarchy fell and was replaced by the nation, the contest was resumed between the French people in the person of their elected representatives, and the same court of Rome. The same principles have been contended for by either side; contradictory principles, it goes without saying, and it is, under the Republic as under the autocratic monarchy, the principle of the supremacy of the State which has, so far, won the day.

In Christian Gaul, the Emperor became the political head of the Church, which was practically constituted in France by the erection of each of the Gallic cities into a bishopric. Later, the cities within the same province were formed into

a metropolis, at the head of which was the metropolitan bishop, who, in the eighth century, assumed the title of archbishop. Seventeen metropolitans there were, with the primate of Gaul over them as superior. The bishops were elected by the clergy, curia and people conjointly, while the ecclesiastical rights and privileges, of so much value in those troublous times, were bestowed upon the Church by the sovereign: Theodosius II granted the right of asylum, and Constantine that of personal immunity to clerics and the right to try cases involving points of faith or morals.

Very early the aristocracy sought to monopolize the higher positions in the Church, and priors, abbots and bishops were usually chosen from the ranks of the nobility. The elective principle, with some modifications, was maintained: the sovereign having the right of confirmation and his consent being a prerequisite to the election itself, and to consecration. This fact, indicative of the position of the King, was stated in the formula of election, which ran as follows: "By the concurrence of the bishops, the consent of the citizens, and the gift of the King."

The bishops naturally inclined to side with the monarch in any difference with the Pope, while the monkish orders, ever striving to render themselves independent of episcopal authority, took the opposite side. Another reason for this cleavage was that, as has been said, the ecclesiastical hierarchy was chiefly recruited from the aristocracy, while the monks found their most numerous adherents among the middle classes and the lower ranks of the population.

In relation to the Church, the King, as long as the monarchy lasted, was himself a member of the sacerdotal order. At his coronation, he was first hallowed, and in this part of the ceremony the clergy alone took part. He was not only the Protector of the temporalities of the Church, he was the Protector of the Faith; his title was Eldest Son of the Church and Most Christian King.

So matters went on, through the greater part of the Middle Ages, as feudalism and chivalry gradually diminished in power and importance, the monarchical idea, on the other, daily gaining greater power and acquiring sway over the mass of the people, who saw in it the surest bulwark against the oppression of the feudal barons. Religious interests which, during the first part of the Middle Ages, are of primary importance and occupy the attention of men almost to the exclusion

of other questions, are largely replaced after the Crusades by political and commercial interests.

When we come to the tenth and eleventh centuries the power of the Papal See has considerably diminished. It is the period of the shame of the papacy and the Church: of John X, John XI, of Benedict, the twelve-year old Pope. The emperors of Germany arrogate to themselves the right to appoint the occupant of the throne of Saint Peter, and in Italy, as in Germany, are at once head of the State, and practically head of the Church. The great Hildebrand put an end to this disorder; he it was who founded the Sacred College, which has ever since had the election of popes. He himself was elected Supreme Pontiff in 1073, under the title of Gregory VII, and he insistently carried out his policy of making the Pope supreme within the Church, and the Church over the State. His success in the case of Germany is historical, and if he did not triumph over the French sovereigns also, it is simply because there were no occasions of division as great as with the Germans. But there was trouble; there could not help being trouble with so energetic a man, of convictions so strong and of perseverance so steadfast. He took his stand against the right of secular sovereigns to bestow the investiture upon prelates, and this began the long quarrel destined to end in a compromise which, on the whole, left the practical victory with the State and not with the Church.

The question, indeed—though raised with regard to the investiture of the prelates with their temporalities—involved, in reality, the principle of the supremacy of the Church over the State, and it was at once perceived by the sovereigns of Europe, whom Gregory strove to bend to his will, that if the Roman See triumphed in this respect, their hold on their own subjects must be so loosened that they would in fact be at the mercy of the Supreme Pontiff. The successful carrying out of the Gregorian policy would have meant the concentration of all power, spiritual and temporal, in the hands of the one man who, for the time, occupied the See of Rome. And no worse evil could have befallen the civilized world than this combination of two powers, which should ever be kept distinct. It was plainly seen in the case of England and Henry VIII, and in France in later times, when Napoleon sought to attain the same end as regards his people.

The Hundred Years' War, which desolated France from 1328 to 1436, brought about the final downfall of chivalry and

the serious weakening of the feudal nobility, ever a powerful and active opponent of hereditary monarchy. The latter, on the contrary, emerged from the long and bloody struggle distinctly more stable and more powerful. And one of the first consequences of this reinvigoration was the change in the relative influence of the State and the Church.

The papacy had fallen from its high estate. Already the kings of France, even while engaged in maintaining their claims against the nobility, had successfully compelled the Roman pontiff to yield on many important points. Their writs ran in the French territories of the Church as they ran in the lands of the barons; their courts took precedence of the ecclesiastical courts, and the right of appeal lay from the latter to the former; the power of interdict and excommunication was vastly diminished and circumscribed; the King, his Queen, his heir, his officials were exempt from the action of the once dreaded measure, and the lands of the sovereign were equally freed from its influence. Philip the Handsome vindicated the independence of the French crown. When Boniface VIII died, in 1303, his successor was chosen by the French King. In 1308 Clement V transported the seat of the papacy to Avignon, in the territories of France, and thus began a period of humiliation and dependence for the pontiffs which lasted until 1378, when occurred the Great Western Schism—the Romans obtaining the election of a pope pledged to reside within the Eternal City, while the cardinals elected another who returned to Avignon. The Council of Pisa, in 1409, deposed both these popes, and elected another in their place, but the occupants of the Roman and the Avignon sees refused to abandon their power, and the Church had three popes at one and the same time. Finally, the Council of Constance, held from 1414 to 1418, elected Martin V, and deposed the three other popes, thus restoring order and decency within the Church.

But, at the same time, the Council proclaimed the superiority of œcumenical councils over the popes themselves, a superiority of which the Council had itself given such unmistakable proof by the action it had taken.

The French sovereigns had now no further quarrel with the popes, who, for a season, abandoned their claims to temporal power over the crowned heads of Europe and were, perforce, satisfied to enjoy their Italian temporalities. But in matters spiritual, the appointment of bishops for instance,

there were seeds of frequent friction, especially as the papacy did not hesitate to grant French bishoprics to foreigners and claimed to act as the final court of appeal in many cases of law.

Charles VII called together the French clergy at Bourges in 1438 in order to clear up matters, and the results of the deliberations of the body were formulated in the Pragmatic Sanction, the charter of the Liberties of the Gallican Church. By this instrument, the declaration of the Council of Constance, that the councils are superior to the Pope, was re-affirmed; the appointments to bishoprics and abbeys were taken from the pontiffs, and appeals were not to be taken to Rome until after they had passed through the successive grades of courts in France. In 1479, however, Louis XI modified the Pragmatic Sanction by an agreement entered into with the Pope, by which the latter bound himself to nominate Frenchmen only and to abide by the selections of the King. This was important and bears directly upon one phase of the present quarrel, inasmuch as it exhibits the steadfast purpose of the French to be governed, even in spiritual matters affecting the organization and administration of the State, by Frenchmen only.

Francis I, in 1516, won yet another point; by the Concordat entered into by Pope Leo X and himself, the former acknowledged the right of the King to appoint to all ecclesiastical benefices within the realm. The effect of this was at once to transform the episcopate into a dependency of the crown.

But the sixteenth century presents another aspect of the question of Church and State. From the moment that the supremacy of the King within his realm was recognized, the King became the close ally of the Roman See, and the principle of the right of sovereigns to compel their subjects to hold the same faith as their ruler was put into practice. Francis I and his immediate successors persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, hanged, burned and massacred the Huguenots because the Church declared the latter heretics, that is, because they held different views on matters of faith and conscience from those promulgated by the Roman Church. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the Huguenots, with Calvin at their head, did exactly the same by those whom they, in their turn, called heretics, and the burning of Michael Servetus, the Unitarian, is on a par with similar acts under Roman Catholic direction.

This alliance of Church and State lasted until the Revolution, and there was a renaissance of virulence due to it, during the period of the Restoration. The alliance persisted, in spite of occasional friction between the popes and the kings, because, in effect, the kings had a free hand in church matters within their own dominions.

The story of France, during the sixteenth century, is the story of religious wars; of the massacres of Vassy, the Saint Bartholomew, and many more; of the establishment of the Holy Catholic League; of the introduction into French fortified cities of the Spanish foe, at the instigation of the monks and their allies; of the murder of the Duke of Guise by command of Henry III; of the assassination of the latter by order of the Jesuits; of the struggle of Henry IV to reconquer his realm, and of his final success, which was crowned by the proclamation of the celebrated Edict of Nantes, in 1598.

This edict provided freedom of conscience and of worship to the Huguenots, and granted a subsidy of 165,000 livres annually—equal to rather more than 100,000 dollars—for the salaries of the Protestant clergy, professors and school teachers; guaranteed equality of civil rights in every respect; established in each High Court—or Parliament, as these were termed,—a court composed half of Roman Catholic and half of Protestant judges; finally, it gave Protestants the right to fill any office in the State and to embrace any of the learned professions. It was the natural complement to the King's abjuration of the Protestant religion, intended to satisfy the Roman Catholics, as the edict was intended to pacify and reassure the Huguenots. Unfortunately the edict, of necessity, under the conditions of the times, also granted the Protestants the right to hold political assemblies, as well as synods for the transaction of ecclesiastical matters. This provision, used and abused by the Huguenots, led, shortly afterwards to grave events which culminated in the restriction of political liberty, or, rather, to the total abolition of the political privileges.

On the other hand, it was found indispensable to restrain at once the pernicious agitation carried on by the Roman Catholic orders, chief among which was the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits. Several attempts on the King's life brought out the fact that these were promoted by the religious orders; one of the would-be murderers boldly stating that the Pope not having approved the elevation of Henry IV to the throne, it

was permissible to kill him. Among the papers of the Jesuit who had mainly set him on, were found letters not only approving the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, but expressing, in addition, regret that the Protestant princes of the blood royal had been spared on that occasion; characterizing the attempted murder of Henry by another fanatic as "a gift of the Holy Ghost," and urging the arrest and imprisonment of the sovereign. The man was tried, and one of the results of the trial was an order, concurred in by all the courts of justice in France, expelling the Jesuits from the country. This occurred in 1595, but nine years later—hoping thereby to put an end to the incessant attempts on his life—Henry granted the Jesuits permission to return, confining them, however, to residence in fourteen specified towns, binding them not to administer the sacraments without the leave of the bishops and—a notable proviso—the courts of justice (representing the King), not to acquire property without sanction first obtained from the sovereign, not to admit any foreign member of the order into France, and finally to have at court a hostage responsible for the due fulfillment of these conditions.

It has been said that the Protestant party possessed the right, under the Edict of Nantes, to hold political assemblies, and that this was a source of danger to the royal power, or to the State, in other words. The truth of the fact shortly became evident, and Louis XIII had to take up arms against the Calvinists. It was the great patriot and statesman Richelieu who broke the power of the Protestants, and this, not from any dislike or hatred of the Protestants, for all his foreign alliances were with Protestant powers, but from the conviction that the affairs of Church and State could not wisely be associated, especially in the hands of a minority. The siege and capture of La Rochelle, the last stronghold of the Huguenots in 1628, was followed by the publication of the Edict of Grace, by which all the political power of the Protestants was swept away, while, at the same time, their civil rights were scrupulously respected and their freedom of worship and conscience maintained. Indeed, the Protestant clergy shared the immunity from taxation enjoyed by their Roman Catholic colleagues. The point Richelieu aimed at was to establish beyond the peradventure of a doubt the supremacy of the power of the State, incarnated, at that period and long afterwards, in the person of the King.

When Louis XIV, on Mazarin's death, assumed the direc-

tion of affairs, the status of the Church in France was still regulated by the Concordat of 1516, which, however, did not apply automatically to the provinces added to the realm since that date. The policy of Louis was to unify his kingdom in every respect, and he consequently proceeded to attempt the establishment of the provisions of the Concordat in those portions of his dominions in which it was not in force. This created trouble with the Pope, and other causes contributed to embitter the quarrel, to such an extent that at one moment it seemed impossible to avoid a schism analogous to that under Henry VIII of England. The Pope and Louis, who both aspired to direct European policy, were at odds also on other points. The Pope had condemned certain theological theses—written by candidates in Paris—in which the maxims of the Gallican Church were boldly upheld, and in some of which the infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff was denied. Then came the question of the *regale*. This was the right of the King, or, at least the claim of the King, to draw the revenues of a bishopric during a vacancy in the incumbency of the See, and to administer the patronage thereof. A number of dioceses were exempt from this, and Louis promptly subjected them to the general rule. Two bishops protested and Pope Innocent XI intervened in the matter. The King summoned an assembly of the French clergy in 1680, and that assembly, spite of the threats of the Roman Pontiff, sustained the contention of the sovereign and the exercise of his power. "We feel deeply," said the assembled prelates, "the threats directed against the Eldest Son and Protector of the Church, and we are so attached to Your Majesty that nothing can separate us from you."

Two years later, matters meanwhile having grown worse rather than better, yet more decisive action was taken by a general assembly of the French clergy, acting, or claiming to act, as a national council. The papal decree against the royal action was declared to be *ultra vires* of the Pontiff. The King, in return for this declaration, consented to hold in abeyance the exercise of his right. The assembly proceeded to formulate the *Four Propositions*, which thereafter constituted the basis of the Liberties of the Gallican Church. These four propositions were ordered to be taught in every seminary for the training of priests, and to be subscribed to by every prelate. A part, at least, of the clergy, and all the courts regarded them as a fundamental law of the State. Their

effect was to proclaim the independence of the State, in temporal matters, from the See of Rome, and to define the autonomy, up to a certain point, of the Church in France. They may be briefly summed up as follows:

1. God has not bestowed upon Saint Peter or his successors any direct or indirect power over things temporal.
2. In things spiritual, œcumenical councils are superior to the Pope.
3. The rules, customs and statutes received by the realm and the Church of France are to remain unchangeable.
4. In matters of faith, the decisions of the Sovereign Pontiff become irrevocable only after they have been consented to by the Church.

The religious orders submitted, although they had ever been the most indocile. The Jesuits, the most independent and the most devoted to papal supremacy, ceased to preach that doctrine, taught, as required, the four propositions to their scholars, and inculcated in their minds obedience to the King as a cardinal principle.

His supremacy within the realm having thus been clearly established, the King listened willingly to suggestions to extirpate heresy within his dominions. This was the more to be expected because his whole policy tended to unification within the kingdom. The persecution of the Protestants was vigorously undertaken. As early as 1665, Protestant worship is forbidden within certain portions of the territory; of France: the national synod which was summoned biennially is prohibited; the Protestant-Catholic courts are suppressed; apostasies are encouraged by bribes and exemptions from taxation and other burdens, as well as by the wiping out of all debts contracted towards Protestants; children of both sexes are taken from their parents and immured in convents, where they are compelled to become Roman Catholics; all public employments are closed to the Reformed; the professions are barred to them, and ere long even business is forbidden them; they are not permitted to bury their dead, save secretly and by night.

In 1684, to accelerate conversions, dragoons are despatched to the Protestant centres, and given free hand to do as they please with the inhabitants. On October 12, 1685, the Edict of Nantes is formally repealed, and Protestant ministers are required to leave the kingdom forthwith if they do not abjure their religion; all other members of the persecuted faith are,

on the contrary, forbidden to leave, but required to abjure, under penalty of the galleys for the men, of prison for the women. All Protestant schools are closed, and all children born to Protestant parents are to be baptized into the Roman Church. Such ministers as would neither abjure—and none did—nor forsake their persecuted flocks, were arrested, tortured and broken on the wheel, while the drums beat to drown their voices. Hundreds and thousands of men were sent to the galleys, their wives into prison, their daughters into convents. Such were the first fruits of the union of Church and State, of the commingling of spiritual and temporal power. And that it may not be thought that the Church reproveth the cruelties and barbarities, here is what the greatest prelate of that day in France, Bossuet, who urged the revocation; Bossuet, the friend and counsellor of the King, said in his funeral eulogy of Michel Le Tellier, Chancellor of France, who had sealed the revocation with the great seal:

“Our ancestors did not see, as we have seen, an inveterate heresy disappear suddenly; the strayed flocks returning in crowds, and our churches too small to receive them; their false teachers abandon them without even waiting to be ordered to do so, and glad to have their banishment to allege as an excuse; calmness reigning in so great a crisis; the universe amazed at beholding in so novel an event the assured mark as well as the noblest use of authority, and the merits of the Sovereign recognized and revered even more than his authority. Touched by so many marvels, let us pour out our hearts upon the piety of Louis; let our shouts ring to heaven; and let us say to this new Constantine, to this new Theodosius, to this new Marcian, to this new Charlemagne, what the six hundred and thirty fathers said of yore in the Council of Chalcedon: ‘You have strengthened the faith; you have suppressed the heretics; this is the righteous work done in your reign; it is the characteristic of it. Through you heresy is no more. God alone could bring such a wonder to pass. King of Heaven, preserve the King of the earth; such is the prayer of the churches; such is the prayer of the bishops.’”

Let it be remembered, however, that the point of view of that age was very different from that of the present day. Bossuet not only conscientiously believed that the Calvinists

were the enemies of God and His Church, but also that they were therefore enemies of the State. And the generally received opinion was that as the ruler believed, so must the subjects believe also. Further, in Protestant countries, the lot of the Roman Catholics was no better, though nowhere were barbarities practiced on such a scale as by Louis XIV.

During the remainder of the reign of Louis XIV, the status of Church and State remained unchanged. The close union of the two powers caused them, in the succeeding age, to be attacked together, for it was impossible to draw attention to the abuses within the Church without incurring the wrath of the civil power. The throne and the altar thus became more and more closely bound in the minds of the people, of the reformers and of the revolutionists, and when the Revolution broke out throne and altar suffered together.

What the Revolution did was to transfer the sovereignty from the King to the people itself, which became for the first time the French nation. The kings had been perfectly clear as to their own supremacy. In the days of Louis XIII, Le Bret, in his "Treatise on the Sovereignty of Kings," called royalty "supreme power delegated to one man only which gives him the right to command absolutely." He went on to declare that "the first mark of sovereignty is that it depends on God alone," and he scouted the notion that the sovereignty of the King "could be made to depend on any other power than that of God alone."

Louis XIV was perfectly clear in his own mind as to his supremacy. In the *Memoirs* he wrote for the instruction of his son, the Dauphin, he speaks as follows: "Because Churchmen are apt to rate overmuch the advantages of their profession and endeavor occasionally to use them to the diminution of their most legitimate duties, I believe myself bound to explain, with regard to this, certain points which are of some importance.

"The first is that kings are absolute lords and have naturally the full and free disposal of all property, both of the secular and of the ecclesiastics, to use as wise economists, that is, according to the needs of their State.

"The second is that those mysterious expressions: franchises and liberties of the Church, with which, it may be, it will be attempted to dazzle you, concern equally all the faithful, whether lay or tonsured, who are all equally sons of that common mother, but they do not exempt either lay or tonsured

from subjection to the Sovereign, to whom the Gospels themselves enjoin them indeed to be submissive.

"The third is that whatever may be said of the particular object of Church property and of the intention of the founders thereof is but baseless scruple; because it is patent that those who founded the benefices could not, in bestowing their inheritance, free it from the taxes or other payments they paid to their lords."

The fourth point bears on the duty of the Church to pay aids to the King and Louis goes on: "And finally the fifth is that if there be any persons among those who dwell under our rule who are bound even more than the others to serve us with all their goods, it is the holders of benefices, who hold all they have by our good pleasure only."

This was stating very clearly the supremacy of the Sovereign, or State, and the ownership of ecclesiastical property by the Sovereign, that is, by the State.

Kings and prelates alike held that the King reigned by divine right. Bossuet, in his sermon "Of the Duties of Kings," says: "'Kings reign by Me,' says the Eternal Wisdom; hence we are to conclude not only that the rights of royalty are established by His Laws, but likewise that the choice of the individuals is a work of His Providence. By Him all Kings reign."

Fléchier and others preached the doctrine from the pulpit. The Revolution affirmed that "the principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation." The kings had maintained their supremacy as against the Church; the nation henceforward was to take the same attitude. Religious tolerance was the logical outcome of the equality and liberty and fraternity which the Revolution took as the very basis of society; tolerance had long since disappeared under Louis XIV, and at the time the Revolution broke out, more than a million of Frenchmen were outlaws, simply because they were Protestants. The King had never considered the giving of education a part of his duties towards his people; he had left that matter wholly in the hands of the Church, which had obtained and retained absolute control of it. There was no primary education nor gratuitous education; it was not desired that there should be; it lay not within the policy of the Church, or of the King that instruction should be general, and such instruction as was given was based on the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church. The Revolution, affirming the duty of the State

to provide gratuitous education for all citizens, and affirming at the same time liberty of conscience, of speech, of worship, it was plain that the eventual result must be lay education for the people of France, whenever that education was given by the State.

In 1789 the Church occupied a highly privileged position in France. The clergy constituted the first order of the State, with the nobility second. Below them, at an immense depth below—in the view of the two privileged orders—was the third estate, the great bulk of the nation, the burden bearer, the taxpayer. The clergy, numbering some one hundred thousand, owned about one-third of the landed property in the country, and drew therefrom and from tithes and other sources, a revenue of nearly four hundred millions. All the higher offices in the Church were held exclusively by members of the nobility; all the valuable benefices were reserved to them; the hard work and starvation pay were the share of the lower clergy, or country clergy, who suffered equally with the wretched tillers of the soil and who shared their aspirations for a change in the condition of affairs. The corruption in morals which had so unhappily invaded the upper classes, and which was shamelessly exhibited by Louis XV in person, was too visible among the higher clergy and those abbés who, neglectful of the vows they had taken on themselves, were the assiduous frequenters not of drawing-rooms alone, but of the foulest places of vice in the capital. The head of the ecclesiastical establishment, in the days of Louis XVI, Louis, Cardinal de Rohan—who obtained the position, thanks to his birth and his family influence and in spite of the determined opposition of Marie Antoinette—was a man of such evil life that when he was appointed by Louis XV ambassador to the Viennese court, Maria Theresa insisted on his being recalled, as she refused to have such a man in her dominions.

The intolerance of the Church reached its culminating point during the eighteenth century. At the very moment the great philosophers and writers of that period were pleading eloquently the rights of man, the Church, using the secular arm, was engaged in the most ferocious persecution of innocent men, and having Calas put to death after atrocious torture, and d'Etallonde, accused of sacrilege, handed over to the executioner, who first cut off his right hand, next pulled out his tongue by the roots, and finally decapitated him. It seems, looking back upon the conduct of the Church at that

time, as if it were seized with madness and bent upon justifying beforehand the injustice and persecution to which in its turn it was so soon to fall a victim.

On the other hand, the conduct and devotion of the poorer clergy won for it the trust and affection of the common people, and when the States General were summoned in 1789, it was the defection of the clergy to the Third Estate which brought about the reunion of the three estates into the National Assembly. None the less troublous times were in store for it, and the national representation was about to assert far greater claims than the most autocratic of monarchs.

The first step was to strip the Church of her vast wealth, on which she paid no taxes, on the pretext that it was the property of God, and that God could not be taxed. At the famous sitting, on August 4, 1789, the bishop of Uzes declared that the Church had received its rights and the titles to its properties from the nation, and the logical consequence of that declaration was soon applied. On November 2, the National Assembly decreed that all ecclesiastical property was the property of the State, and that the latter would henceforth provide for the salaries of the clergy and the maintenance and relief of the poor. Thus the clergy became functionaries or employees of the State.

This might have been borne with, as, indeed, the clergy had been practically, under the monarchy, dependent upon the King; but unhappily the Assembly went farther, and passed the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, July 12, 1790. This law abrogated the Concordat of 1516, ordered that bishops should be elected by the same electors who had the right to elect deputies; priests by district electors. The bishops were forbidden to seek confirmation by the Pope, and after institution they were to take the oath of fidelity to the Nation, the Law and the King. In November, as if the Act itself were not sufficiently meddlesome and arbitrary, there appeared a decree requiring all members of the clergy to take the prescribed oath. At once the vast majority of the French clergy, and the Pope, protested. Then began that long persecution of the Church which, becoming embittered and barbarous beyond all measure as the Terrorists gained the upper hand, lasted until nearly the time of the Concordat of 1801. Churches were closed, public worship forbidden, Christianity abolished by

decree, and the existence of God denied. To the honor of the Roman Catholic Church be it said that the greater the persecution the more steadfast the adherence to duty. Then was redeemed the character of the Church, so gravely compromised by the evil lives of so many members during the days of prosperity. Many paid with their blood for their allegiance to their faith, many were massacred, many were compelled to go into hiding, but not once, during the greatest stress of the storm, did a day pass without the solemn sacrifice of the mass being celebrated somewhere in Paris. Nay, in the very prisons where the Committee of Public Safety crowded its victims, the consolations of religion were brought by devoted ministers of the faith, and even in the Conciergerie, the Ante-chamber of Death, where reigned Fouquier-Tinville, the martyr Queen, Marie Antoinette, received the sacrament in her cell.

But this is a digression, though one which must be pardoned.

The Revolution destroyed its own leaders and men of mark; after the work of the guillotine was done, only second rate men were left, and then arose the Child of the Revolution, the man who was to tame it and enslave it: Bonaparte. Clear-sighted, devoid of any religious convictions, ready to profess any form of worship which might serve his purpose, he quickly came to the conclusion that the Convention had greatly erred in persecuting the Roman Catholic Church, to which the French, with but few exceptions, had been so long and were still so deeply attached. He determined to restore it, and for this purpose entered upon negotiations with Pope Pius VII. The result was the signing of the famous Concordat of 1801, which has just been abrogated by the French Government, although, it should be noted, the Roman Pontiff does not admit the right of one of the parties to a bargain to withdraw from it.

The main provisions of the Concordat were that Roman Catholicism was recognized as the religion of the majority of the French people; that its worship was to be free and public, and its bishops and priests to receive suitable incomes from the State. All ecclesiastical buildings not sold and really needed for worship, were to be placed at the disposal of the bishops, and the churches were permitted to receive gifts from the faithful. The archbishops and bishops were to be nomi-

nated by the Chief of the State, and canonically instituted by the Pope, while priests were to be nominated by the bishops and approved by the Government. All, bishops and priests, were to swear allegiance and obedience to the State.

The Concordat was completed by the Organic Articles, which, however, were not, like the Concordat itself, a treaty, but laws of the State. They settled the relations between the Church and the civil power, the mode of holding public worship, the new division of sees, and the salaries of the incumbents, and they expressly stipulated that no bull or other act emanating from Rome should be published in France without the sanction of the Government, nor could any nuncio, legate or other representative of the Holy See enter into and reside in France without a like sanction. These provisions clearly guarded the supreme rights of the State.

From the moment the Concordat was signed, the Roman Catholic Church, restored after the persecution, entered upon a new phase. It was not wholly a State church; it was deprived of the power it had enjoyed formerly of interfering with other communions; it was no longer a landed proprietor; it was paid by the State; it had lost the important function of keeping the registers of births, deaths and marriages, handed over to the civil authorities. It saw the Protestant Church, which it had so wantonly persecuted, recognized equally with itself, for Napoleon treated the Lutherans and Calvinists exactly as he treated the Roman Catholics, granting an appropriation for salaries, but expressly forbidding any intercourse with foreign powers. It beheld the Jews, whose lot had been so utterly wretched under the old regime, raised to the level of a recognized religion, although the State, until 1831, did not include in its budget an appropriation for the pay of the rabbis.

Napoleon fell, and the Bourbons, in the person of Louis XVIII, returned to France under the protection of British, Austrian and Russian bayonets. They returned, having learned nothing and forgotten nothing, and straightway began the virulent clerical reaction known as the White Terror. The Jesuits, more active than ever, created the famous Congregation, a semi-religious, semi-political society. The reaction was sufficiently strong to cause the passage of a law on sacrilege, which, in its provisions, recalled the worst features of the brigandage of justice of the middle of the previous century.

When the Legitimists fell, in 1830, and Louis Philip came to the throne by election, the clergy was carefully prevented from interfering in politics, and so eager was the Government to check any ecclesiastical fervor that it ordered the sacred emblems in the courts of justice to be removed—as was done not long ago under the Third Republic. These were presently restored, but the incident was significant. At the same time, the State spent large sums on the construction, repair and maintenance of church buildings throughout France.

We now come to the troublous times under the Third Republic.

No sooner was it proclaimed than it was seen it would have to contend with determined foes within: the Bonapartists, whom not even the disastrous fall of the Second Empire could dismay wholly; the Monarchists, divided, it is true, into two sections, each jealous of the other, but ready to combine in order to bring about the destruction of the new order of things. The Legitimists recalled the "good old days" of the old régime; the Orleanists sang the praises of the happy times of the Bourgeois King. The clergy, in numbers at least, sided against the Republic. They clearly perceived that the Government, heir to the Revolution, must of necessity carry out the principles of the Revolution to their utmost logical conclusion. For—and this point is of much importance—the French mind is an essentially logic-loving mind. The Frenchman proceeds rigorously to the logical conclusion he sees before him. And the logical conclusion of the principles proclaimed by the First Republic must be the secularization of national education, and the eventual separation of Church and State, even in the restricted form in which the Concordat of 1801 had cast it. It was plain to any thinking man acquainted with the temperament of the French race that the days of clerical independence, as in the case of religious orders, were numbered. Probably these issues presented themselves with singular clearness to the minds of the Roman Pontiff and his advisers. It is certain that they were inevitable. And the events of recent years have proved that the outcome was speedy.

The first great sensation was caused by the Law of Associations, although the laws on primary compulsory and gratuitous education had already shown what was to be expected. The law of associations was rendered necessary by the educa-

tion measures, since secular teaching was alone sanctioned by the latter acts.

Religious orders experienced, even under the monarchy, difficulties analogous to those from which they have recently suffered. Their origin goes back to the Middle Ages, when orders, at once military and religious, were established for the purpose of defending Christendom against the pagans. Of these the most famous was the order of the Knights Templars, founded in 1118, and which speedily attained to great power and vast wealth. Next came the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John, at first created with the view of tending and nursing the sick; this order subsequently changed its name to Knights of Rhodes, and defended that island against the Turks; driven from it, they became the Knights of Malta, and in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, formed a nursery of profitable benefices for the scions of nobility. The head of the order in France, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was the Duke of Vendome, one of the most corrupt men in a profoundly corrupt court. A third order was that of Saint Lazarus, which, like that of Malta, became a purely honorary order. The Templars were attainted by order of Philip Augustus, and their Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, with a number of his colleagues, was found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was carried out on a small island on the Seine, at Paris, where the Templars were burned alive. This occurred in 1314.

By the side of the military orders were the mendicant orders, the most celebrated of which were the Dominicans, Franciscans and Capuchins. The members of these orders took the vow of poverty, which did not prevent the orders themselves from accumulating enormous wealth. The Society of Jesus was founded at Paris by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534, and from the outset was, by its statutes, independent of kings and bishops, and dependent on the Pope alone. Expelled in 1595, and allowed to return in 1604, they were again expelled from France in 1764, though the members were permitted to remain as private individuals, subject to the authority of the bishops. Pope Clement XIV suppressed them throughout Europe, but Pope Pius VII restored the order in 1814, and the Jesuits returned into France shortly afterwards under the name of Fathers of the Faith.

Louis XIV, whose devotion to the Roman Catholic Church has been dwelt upon, expressly declared that no religious orders might settle in France without the permission of the King, given in the form of letters patent, sealed with the great seal. Three successive edicts, in 1659, 1666 and 1695, confirmed this declaration, and the prohibition was extended even to the establishment of charitable institutions administered by religious.

Louis XV, in 1749, issued an edict in restraint of religious orders and of the mania of endowment of their establishments. All unauthorized establishments were closed and the King determined the manner of disposing of the property thus forfeited. In 1766 nine congregations were suppressed in one diocese alone. In 1770 a commission, the Commission of Union, was appointed for the purpose of reducing the number of religious and of monasteries, convents and religious establishments in the kingdom. The result was that while in 1770 there had been 26,000 men in such establishments, which numbered 3000, by 1789 there were but 15,000 and 300 religious houses.

The Revolution went farther. On Oct. 28, 1789, the Assembly forbade French subjects to take monastic vows upon themselves, and suppressed all monastic institutions. This measure was softened by the grant of permission to a number of the religious to end their days in a house of their order, collecting many of them into one establishment. The women were not disturbed. The property of these establishments reverted to the State.

The next step was the suppression of the teaching orders, on the ground that they trespassed on the function of the State, which henceforth undertook the care of public education. Shortly afterwards, in August, 1792, the Hospitallers and Sisters of Mercy were likewise suppressed. It is interesting to note that one society of women, that of the Sisters Hospitallers of Saint Thomas of Villeneuve, was, by special favor, and on account of the notable services they rendered to the sick poor, permitted to occupy their home during the whole period of the Terror under the protection of the bloodthirsty authorities of that time.

With the return of the Bourbon sovereigns at the time of the Restoration, the religious orders forthwith sprang into life again, but part of them after seeking and obtaining author-

ity from the State, part deliberately declining to do so, in order to affirm their complete independence from the authorities. Among the latter were the Jesuits, the Chartreux, the Dominicans, the Trappists, the Franciscans and the Capuchins. These unauthorized societies, though tolerated, had no legal right to hold property of any kind. Nor did the Bourbon monarchy any more than the Government of Louis Philip acknowledge the right of these orders to exist in France.

The Second Empire came and went, and was replaced by the Third, the present, Republic. In 1880 measures were taken against the unauthorized orders. The Jesuits were ordered to dissolve within three months, and all other unauthorized orders were required, within the same space of time, to apply for authority or go. They refused to do so, and the State exercised its undoubted right—as exercised already under the monarchy—of closing the establishments.

Let us now pass for a moment to the education question, closely bound up with that of the religious orders. From the moment that, at the outbreak of the Revolution, the principle that the State owes it to its citizens—not subjects—to provide all children with gratuitous elementary education, that it is bound to tolerate all forms of worship, to recognize and guarantee absolute freedom of conscience, to avoid favoring one church or mode of thought more than another, it was evident that the logical outcome of this policy must be the establishment of secular education throughout the country. The disappearance of anything resembling a State Church facilitated this result. The fact that the clergy of three churches, the Roman Catholic, the Protestant (Calvinist and Lutheran) and the Jewish were paid by the State out of the national budget, was but a reason why that clergy should obey the wishes of the national Government, so long as it accepted national money. The alternative, of course, was to abandon the subsidy and rely upon the revenue to be obtained from the adherents of the various churches for the carrying on worship and all it involves. That is, to adopt the plan which has been pursued in this country with such signal success, and which has the great advantage of keeping church matters entirely apart from political controversies.

In March, 1882, was passed the law on primary compulsory education. It was the logical outcome of the law of 1881 which had established the principle of gratuitous education

by the State. The new law made education compulsory and secular, thus reversing the laws of 1833 and 1850 which had placed religious instruction in the very forefront of obligatory studies in primary education. Compulsory education, it was argued, logically involved secular teaching and rendered religious teaching impossible, since it is plain that the State has no business to decide what shall be the religious convictions of any of its citizens.

In October, 1886, another law was passed which compelled the laicization of teachers. The crucial part of the new law was Article 17, which reads: "In public schools of every sort, teaching is entrusted exclusively to a lay staff. In schools for boys, the change from the clerical to the lay staff must be carried out within five years."

There were at the time in France 16,341 clerical teachers, of whom 13,860 were women. The number of schools in which they taught was: 1091 boys' schools, 8802 girls' schools, and 1744 kindergartens (*écoles maternelles*), all public.

This article was declared by the opposition to be in the nature of persecution, inasmuch as it threw out of employment a large body of men and women on account of their religious beliefs, but it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that it was the logical outcome of the principle repeatedly indorsed by the people at the polls. There was another article, which certainly smacked more of persecution, or, at least, of hardship; it was the 25th, which forbade teachers to serve gratuitously, or for pay in any capacity in connection with public worship.

Then came the famous Law of Associations of July 1, 1901, round which raged so fierce and long a battle, in which the passions on both sides had full play.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man, which forms the preamble to the Constitution first elaborated by the National Constituent Assembly, included the right of citizens to associate themselves together for any purpose, religious, political, benevolent, or any other. It also recognized the right of meeting, which of necessity involves the right to assemble at any time without permanent organization. These rights are so much in the spirit and practice of the Americans and the British that it seems at first sight absurd that any law should be needed to proclaim them, still less that they should be regulated by a law. But in France, these rights, although thus solemnly proclaimed and justly held to be essential and

inalienable, have never been fully practiced, and the successive governments, whether republican, imperial or monarchical, have, on the contrary, restricted them with greater or less care. Even in 1791, in the full flush of the new régime, the right of workmen to meet for discussion of questions in connection with their trades was denied. The Constitution of 1793 granted the right of popular associations only; but even then the vaunted liberty which the Revolution claimed to be the birthright of every man, was absolutely denied to the Royalists, whose meetings were proscribed. Successive constitutions and decrees and laws further restricted the right: first, political associations were forbidden to affiliate, to correspond with each other, to wear special badges; next, all political associations prohibited. Under the Consulate, it was enough to be known as a member or a former member of a political association to secure transportation to a convict station. Under the First Empire the Penal Code, in its sections 291 to 294, restricted absolutely the right of association, even when the object was wholly foreign to politics, no company of more than twenty persons being allowed to meet without preliminary authorization of the Government. And this law remained in force until the other day.

The Restoration and the Government of Louis Philip maintained the restrictions, and the latter even increased them, for it was found that the law was evaded by the formation of groups of less than twenty persons, which acted in unison. The new law forbade any such evasion.

The Revolution of 1848, which ended in the establishment of the short-lived Second Republic, at first abolished all laws tending to impede the natural right of meeting and association for any purpose whatever, but the political education of the people had not yet advanced sufficiently far, and the fear of the authorities was still too great to allow of this application of the principle to be maintained, and restriction again came to the front. Clubs—political—were compelled to obtain permits, to open their meetings to the public, and the Government was represented by an official. Napoleon III returned to the provisions of the Penal Code, and forbade even the meeting of electors to discuss matters on which they had subsequently to vote. When the Empire tried to become liberal, meetings for non-political purposes were permitted, but meetings of electors still were attended by a representative

of the Government, who had the power to close the meeting.

The Third Republic showed itself more liberal; the law of 1875 granted the right of political meetings on a simple declaration of intention to hold one, but the decree of 1880 revived the laws against the Jesuits and unauthorized religious associations, and to that no one, surely, can take reasonable objection.

This brief recapitulation of the evolution of the right of association and of the right of meeting in France will enable the law on associations to be better understood. The law applies to "associations" not formed for money making purposes, as distinguished from "societies" formed for mutual benefit of the members, or for money making. The latter had always enjoyed governmental favor; the latter, singularly enough, had always been looked upon with suspicion, even if their purpose was absolutely innocent. None the less, many associations of more than twenty persons existed and were winked at, although occasional prosecutions of some of them, according to the likes or dislikes of the ministry in power, were ordered, probably by way of maintaining the law in force. Exceptions were made in favor of trades unions, which, by a law of 1884, had merely to make a preliminary declaration, and of benefit societies, which were exempted by the law of 1898. Both these classes of associations were permitted to hold property, within certain limits, but all other associations were forbidden, unless they obtained from the Government of the day recognition as "*d'utilité publique*."

The law of 1848 absolutely prohibited secret associations; it was maintained; and by a law of 1872, was also prohibited any association, of an international character having for its object the promotion of strikes, attacks on property, the family the idea of the Fatherland, religion or freedom of worship.

The religious associations held a very precarious position under the various laws, more particularly those of 1817 and 1825, and under the decree of 1852, for these laws were, at times, interpreted in very contradictory fashion by the courts. After thirty years of talk and discussion, the law of 1891 was at last brought forward by the Government. It is divided into two parts: the one general, the other specific, and affecting religious associations only. Naturally it was round this

second part that the battle raged fiercely. At first it was sought to avoid specifying the religious associations, and the bill, as drafted, simply stated that associations between Frenchmen and foreigners, or between Frenchmen in foreign lands, or the direction of which was entrusted to foreigners, were, as well as all associations whose members lived together, to obtain authority from the Government as an indispensable condition to their being permitted to establish themselves in France, or, if already settled there, to continue to exist.

But it turned out that the clause unfavorably affected communities of workmen, especially in the north of France, and the communal clause was consequently deleted. The Socialists, daily growing more powerful, protested against the clause referring to international associations, which, they declared, appeared to be aimed against them, in view of their international affiliation, and so finally the Government was driven to name the religious associations alone as the object of the legislation proposed to the Chambers.

The law provides that religious associations may not be established in France, or maintained there, if already in existence, save after having obtained a special permit, which is liable to be revoked at any time by the mere action of the Government. To obtain the permit, a bill must be introduced; to revoke it, no more is needed than the will of the Administration. This certainly appears to place too great a power in the hands of a ministry which, for purposes of its own, might, it is conceivable, work hardship and injustice to a duly authorized association. What complicated matters, and fanned the flame of discord and enmity, was the out-spoken declaration of the Socialist party, by its authorized leader, Viviani, now a member of the Clémenceau Cabinet, that the party intended to use this law to attack and destroy the Church. And not long since Viviani, although a Cabinet minister, and therefore bound not to utter threats unless these express a settled policy on the part of the Government, did, unofficially, declare the purpose of the Socialists to be to drive Christianity from the land. The hostility of the Church is thus justified. The Socialists declared further that while the bill did not go as far as they desired, they were content to accept it as an installment of the legislation they wish to

obtain eventually, especially as non-compliance, on the part of the associations, involved confiscation of their property.

Waldeck Rousseau would not permit himself, or the Government of which he was the head, to be drawn into taking the Socialist position, any more than M. Briand, the present minister in charge of the question, has consented to allow himself to be made the tool of persecution. On the other hand, Combes and Trouillot sided with Viviani, and it is Combes who is at the present moment, with Viviani in the Cabinet, the leader of the forces in determined hostility to religion, whether in the Roman Catholic or any other form. These men obtained the adoption of a further clause depriving members of unauthorized associations, even after dissolution, of the right to teach—a startling penalty.

The debates on the bill are now a matter of history; the bill became law, the associations were expelled and their property reverted to the State.

Then came, still as a logical consequence of the principles which have been laid down, the abrogation of the Concordat of 1801, and the final severance of the relations between the State, as upholder, through the annual appropriations in the budget, of three forms of religion: the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, and the Jewish. Nor is it to be supposed that the steps thus taken will be retraced. The decision of the Government has been repeatedly indorsed by the electorate and the Protestants and the Jews have quietly accepted it.

What, to sum up, have been the causes which have brought about the present condition of affairs in France? If there be blame to be laid, on whom does it rest? That is a question one would fain avoid, but it cannot be avoided. It is one the answer to which, given by impartial observers, whose sympathy lies with religion and whose antipathy manifests itself towards those who would abolish all religion, must of necessity offend some, possibly, nay, probably, both sides.

These causes seem to be as follows: The comparative immobility of the Roman Catholic Church, by which is meant its strong conservatism and its traditional opposition to progress and liberalism in thought; the rigor of its dogma, and its insistent claim that it, and it alone, is the True Church, within whose fold alone is contained the sum of divine truth, and without whose fold salvation is impossible to man, a claim summed up in the famous maxim: *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*.

The Roman Catholic Church, in France, as elsewhere, has steadily and consistently maintained that it alone is the authorized and only possible interpreter of the Scriptures. As we are speaking of France, let the great French prelate be quoted on this point. Bossuet, in his "Letters on Religion,—Proofs of the Three Points Necessary to Salvation," Part III, says: "All men, and ignorant men especially, require an authority which shall decide, without involving them in a discussion of which they are incapable. Who could expect a countrywoman or an artisan to examine the original text, the editions, versions, the various meanings of the sacred text? God would have failed to provide for the needs of nearly all men, had He not given them an *infallible* authority which would spare them the impossible task of research, and to preserve them from erring in it. All societies separated from the Catholic Church found their separation simply upon the offer to make each individual the judge of the Scriptures, and to make him see that the Scriptures contradict that ancient church. An ignorant man needs not books nor reasoning to discover the true Church; with his eyes closed, he knows with certainty that all the churches which seek to make him the judge are false, and that it is only the one which tells him to believe humbly that can be the true one. The more ignorant he is, the more does his ignorance make him feel the absurdity of those sects which seek to set him up as a judge of that which he is incapable of examining. On the other hand, the learned themselves have infinite need of being humiliated and of feeling their incapacity. . . . They have as much need as the most simple among the people of a supreme authority which shall diminish their presumption, correct their prejudices, end their disputes, settle their uncertainties, cause them to agree among themselves, and unite them with the mass. Where is that authority superior to all reasoning to be found? It cannot be in any of the sects which are formed only by making men reason and setting them up as judges of the Scriptures over the Church. It can therefore be found only in that ancient Church called the Catholic Church."

And in his "Discourse on Universal History," Ch. xxvi, "Different Forms of Idolatry," "In that confusion of sects which claimed to be Christian, God did not abandon His Church. He maintained in it a character of authority which heresies were unable to assume. She was Catholic and Universal:

she embraced all times; she reached out in every direction. She was apostolical: continuity, succession, the throne of unity, primitive authority, were hers. . . . Celsius, who reproached the Christians with being divided, noted among so many schismatic churches which he beheld arise, one Church, distinguished from all the others, and ever stronger, which he therefore called *The Great Church*. In the trouble caused by Paul of Samosate, Emperor Aurelian had no difficulty in recognizing the true Christian Church, to which belonged the church building, whether the place of prayer or the habitation of the Bishop.

"Experience has shown that it is to the Catholic Church that it was given to bring in the Gentiles."

And in Ch. xxvii, "This Church, ever attacked, never overcome, is a perpetual miracle and a shining testimony to the unchangeableness of the counsels of God. Amid the tumult of human affairs, it maintains itself by invincible strength; so that, in an uninterrupted course of near seventeen centuries, we see it go back to Jesus Christ in whom she has received the inheritance of the ancient people, and is united with the prophets and the patriarchs," And in the 31st chapter, he declares: "The Church which Jesus Christ, expected during all ages, founded at last on the Rock, and over which Saint Peter and his successors are to preside by His orders, justifies itself by its own continuity, and bears in its eternal duration the proof of the handiwork of God. Let us not, therefore, marvel, as is usually done, that God requires us to believe so many things worthy of Him, and, at the same time, so impenetrable by the mind of man, but rather let us wonder that having established the faith upon so firm and manifest an authority, there remain yet in this world blind and incredulous men."

And, addressing himself to the Dauphin, for whose instruction the Discourse was composed, he adds: "Whatever breaks this connection, whatever parts from this continuity, whatever springs from itself, and does not come as a consequence of the promises made to the Church from the very beginning of the world, must be held in abhorrence by you. Apply your whole strength to recall into that unity whatever has swerved from it, and to make the Church, through which the Holy Spirit utters its oracles, listened to."

The second cause which has acted on the minds of the

French people—for “the evil which men do lives after them”—has been the oppressive character of the policy of the Church as long as it was a State Church; its persecuting and intolerant conduct during so many centuries even up to the time of the Revolution. The memory of the treatment of the Huguenots, of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, of the persecution of the Jansenists, members of the Roman Catholic Church, and devout, spiritual minded men and women, who were hounded by the Jesuits, who saw the nuns of Port Royal harried and dispersed, the buildings razed to the ground, the plough driven over the site of the abbey, the graves of the dead desecrated—these are reasons why the Church has so many enemies yet in France. The persecution of thinkers and writers carried on throughout the centuries, and renewed even after the Revolution when the Restoration gave back power to the clerics, is another cause. As late as the eighteenth century, while it is true the writers were no longer burned at the stake for the opinions they professed, the books they wrote were condemned by the theological faculty of the Sorbonne and the docile courts of justice ordered the books to be burned with fire in the open square, while the writers, if caught, were immured in prison.

The perpetuation of slavery in France itself, for startling as it may sound, at the close of the eighteenth century no less than one hundred and fifty thousand men were held in servage, that is, in slavery, mainly by chapters of religious; its skillful use of the temporal power under the old régime to inflict torture and death upon those who differed from it, under pretext of avenging the Deity; its accumulation of vast wealth, for which it successfully claimed the exemption from the burden of taxes, which pressed with crushing effect upon the mass of the people; the open and unblushing venality and immorality of the higher clergy in the eighteenth century, which caused men to forget the noble self-sacrificing lives of so many saintly prelates and humble priests of that day and of previous generations, “for the good that men do oft is interred with their bones;” and, finally, its interference, under the present Republic, with matters political; its participation in plots directed against the stability and the very existence of a form of government approved by the vast majority of the people,—for, no matter what may be said to the contrary, it is assuredly true that the Church has opposed the Republic in every

way possible, and rightly so, in view of its general policy and its beliefs. But to do this while its clergy was at the same time drawing public money must be held a reason for the hostility it has excited.

There are causes, however, outside the Church, and it would be most unjust to lay the sole blame for the present condition of affairs upon the clergy alone, whether in or out of France. One such cause is the rooted objection—a very natural one—on the part of the French people to even the appearance of foreign dictation in their affairs, and the reported action of the Holy See in seeking to prevent the head of the French nation from visiting the King of Italy—it has been denied, I am aware—roused antagonism which it will be difficult to allay.

Add to these causes the tremendous growth and expansion of the Socialist movement, which appears to intend the destruction of religion itself, and finally the modern conviction that the functions of the State and of the churches are essentially distinct; that tolerance, which is a cardinal principle of modern society, albeit often forgotten and unapplied, involves necessarily non-sectarianism on the part of the State and therefore leads to secular education, and it may be perceived that the present situation in France is, as has been repeatedly said, but the logical outcome of the progress of human thought.

What, under the circumstances, may be expected to occur? It is, such at least is the belief of the speaker, hopeless to look for retrogression on the part of the French Government, or to anticipate a change in that form of government. The French have proved, by more than thirty years of successful administration, that the democratic principle has taken firm root among them. The vast bulk of the population does not desire a return to a monarchy or an empire. The clergy, and a portion of the aristocracy, may do so, but they are not influential enough to sway the mass of the people. The true line of conduct of the churches—and by this is meant every communion, and not the great Roman Catholic Church alone—is surely to accept frankly the situation, to turn it to account in a way that shall refute, as can be refuted, the charge that religion, that Christianity, are unnecessary. Never was religion, never was Christianity more necessary to the welfare of mankind; the Socialist propaganda that would drive Christ

from the minds and souls of men must be fought not by legislation, but by the power of the Word, by the example of the lives of Christians, above all, of the lives of the ministers of Christ.

The French are far from being irreligious in the mass; they are attached to the ancient faith of their fathers, and the Church of Rome has yet a great future before it in the country, which, when a kingdom, was called the "Eldest Daughter of the Church." Christ did not apply to the Roman Government, or seek to upset it, or compel it to legislate in the line. He desired His disciples to follow. He lived the noblest life ever lived on earth, and His power is based on that life. It is for His church, no matter what form it bears here below, to sway the souls of men as He swayed them. Then, and then only, will the dread of religion being swept from civilized lands disappear like the shades of night before the rising sun.



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